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NEWS AND NOTES

THE COUNCIL AT KANSAS CITY

The program meeting of the National Council held in connection with the Department of Superintendence in Kansas City on March 2 was a decided success. The Grand Avenue Temple, with the exception of the Convention Hall the largest and best auditorium in Kansas City, was allotted to us, and was well filled at all three of the sessions. In the absence of President Allan Abbott, Mr. C. C. Certain, of Detroit, presided over the morning session, which had for its topic "Some Phases of the General Reorganization of English Teaching." Mr. James F. Hosis, secretary of the Council, presented the first paper, upon "The New Supervision of English Teaching." He suggested three functions of the supervisor: (1) the adaptation of the course of study to the actual needs of the individual school; (2) leadership of the English corps; and (3) actual guiding of the teaching operations. He pointed out the need for broad scholarship, a thorough knowledge of current educational theory and practice, and almost unlimited tact. Professor Charles S. Pendleton, of the University of Wisconsin, presented a most attractive picture of the "New Teacher of English." Readers of the *Journal* will have the privilege of seeing this paper later. "The New Emphasis of Oral English" was most attractively presented by Mr. Clarence Stratton, Central High School, St. Louis. He reviewed the progress of the present movement for the improvement of our spoken language, and held up the ideals of beauty and effectiveness which we should like to attain. His own words and manner were an excellent example of these ideals. Mr. Vincil C. Coulter, of the State Normal School, Warrensburg, Missouri, presented briefly and vigorously the possibility of twentieth-century equipment. He suggested that if we do not secure for the English departments a fair share of the funds apportioned to our schools for equipment it is probably because we are not definite in our requests. When we know what we want as well as the science people know their needs, and when we state our needs as clearly and promptly, we may fare as well as they at the hands of the superintendents and boards of education.

Promptly at 2:30 Vice-President Clarence Stratton called the afternoon session to order. The topic at this time was "Measures of Results."

President John J. Mahoney, of the State Normal School, Lowell, Massachusetts, presented an illustrated discussion of "Standardizing Composition." By means of definite aims for the grades, of samples of what we ought to expect from each grade, and of some samples of the poorer work which we sometimes get, he made very clear the possibility of setting up definite standards of attainment, grade by grade, and of holding our children to them. Professor William S. Gray, of the School of Education of the University of Chicago, very ably discussed "Scaling Reading Ability." To get Professor Gray's point of view, see his monograph listed in the Book Notices of this issue of the *Journal*. The discussion of "Practical Tests in Grammar," by E. R. Barrett, State Normal School, Emporia, Kansas, was quite largely a presentation of the need and possibility of such tests. It took the speaker but two minutes to describe all that has so far been done in this line. In setting forth the need of tests Mr. Barrett reviewed the values of grammar and included some things which many of his audience felt were exploded theories. Mr. Barrett, however, insisted that actual tests might prove the correctness of his contentions. Professor Louise Pound, of the University of Nebraska, answered the question, "Are Examinations Still Needed?" in the affirmative, especially examinations in literature. She then went on to indicate the sort of examinations which she feels to be most useful.

The last session, on Friday evening, was devoted to "The Essentials." Mr. Allan Cross, State Teachers College, Greeley, Colorado, set forth his notion of "The Essentials in Composition and Grammar." Devoting himself chiefly to the grammar, he maintained that it must be functional grammar—that is, the grammar which would be of use in composition and, to a less extent, in literature. Principal Spencer R. Smith, of the Wendell Phillips High School, Chicago, presented a paper on "The Fundamental Values of Literature." These he found to be, not the knowledge of previous epochs or certain historical facts, but the effect which the literature might have upon the ideals and intellects of the pupils. Incidentally he urged a considerable use of contemporary literature as being most effective for this moral and intellectual training, and as being the sort of thing which we may reasonably expect our pupils to read after they leave school. "English for Vocations" is, according to Superintendent Fred M. Hunter, of Lincoln, Nebraska, merely the English of the common people. He laid it down as a guiding principle in the selection of materials that we must search the activities of life for the activities of the schoolroom. Life in the schoolroom and life

outside are, in his view, continuous. Applying his principle, he thought that all the specialized vocational courses in English should have a large common core, with variation to meet the needs of those preparing for the various vocations. He insisted that the content of the courses should include (a) oral composition as a dominant element; (b) written composition in the practical forms required in everyday life, especially business letters; (c) specially selected reading material for vocational enlightenment; (d) sufficient practice in the reading of current fiction and historical literature, and in the use of the library, to establish a life-habit. Professor J. W. Searson, of the Kansas Agricultural College, closed the meeting with a sparkling discussion of the topic, "Meeting the Local Needs." In humorous yet impressive fashion, by means of the answers to some questionnaires, he convinced us that the most urgent need everywhere is the cultivation of spoken English.

THE ASSOCIATIONS

ALABAMA

The officers of the Alabama Association of Teachers of English have sent a circular letter to the heads of all the summer schools in that state, suggesting five courses in English for the summer schools: (1) Methods for High-School Teachers, (2) Methods for Elementary Teachers, (3) Story-Telling and Dramatization, (4) Public Speaking, (5) Oral Reading. The last two are to have the twofold purpose of training the teacher to do the thing and of enabling her to give helpful suggestions to her pupils. The circular asks for an expression of opinion from these heads of schools, and promises publicity for any particularly interesting courses of which they will send in word.

MONTANA COUNCIL

The Montana Association of Teachers of English held its third annual meeting in Missoula, November 27-28, in connection with the State Teachers' Association. The general subject for discussion was the teaching of literature in the high school. The program was as follows:

President Bowman, of the State School of Mines, in his paper on "The Place of Literature in the High-School Training of the Pupil Who Expects to Enter Scientific or Engineering Work," emphasized the value of appreciation of art in literature for the engineering student, the power of visualization which a study of literature develops, and the contribution which an appreciation of literature makes to the pleasures of life.

Miss McCracken's paper, "The Survey Course in the High School," consisted of a defense of the course in the history of literature in the high school. Her main points were that the teaching of a connected history of literature is essential to the proper comprehension of many productions, and that it makes possible an intelligent reading of older literature. This paper provoked a lively discussion.

The interesting feature of Miss Rich's discussion of "The Organization of the High-School Course in Literature" was her explanation of a course in types of literature. This she offers in the Senior year in the Missoula high school in place of the current course in the history of literature.

Mr. Anders Orbeck emphasized the necessity of a closer "Correlation of College and High-School Literature." He suggested the necessity of teaching primarily concrete data, rather than generalizations, and opposed the teaching of specialized courses in the high school.

Miss Josephine Sutherland presented a report based upon questionnaire sent to all the accredited high schools of the state. Forty-two out of forty-five schools replying give a course in the history of literature. The other three schools make a study of types. Thirty-one schools emphasize movements, two biography. Twenty-six favor a formal course in the history of literature, thirteen do not. As to the correlation of composition and literature, only three schools answered in the negative.

The program just summarized represented the work of a committee on the teaching of literature in the high school. Professor George R. Coffman, the chairman of the committee, in his report stated that the principal aims of high-school teaching of literature should be: (1) to develop interest in reading good literature; (2) to develop power in the pupil to pass independent judgment on the material read; (3) to develop power in the pupil to interpret intelligently the passage on the printed page; (4) to leave in the pupil's mind a definite impression of a comparatively few facts presented clearly rather than of many presented hurriedly—with resultant confusion. He summarized the general problems of the teaching of literature in the Montana high schools as those of correlation, co-operation, and standardization. He reported as the sense of the committee that biography rather than movements should be emphasized in the high school, and that the current course in the history of literature as taught in most high schools tended to defeat rather than further the aims of such a course. The committee holds that the average history of literature with its summaries and its criticisms of

literary productions and its mass of facts tends to develop a sponge rather than to strengthen and mature a growing mental organism. It recommends that the work in literature and composition be closely correlated, and that a balance be struck between contemporary and standard literature.

The committee made the following recommendations for definite action: (1) that a committee of three be appointed to compile from contemporary magazines and books a list of readings for use in the Montana high schools, such a list to be published; (2) that a committee of three, consisting of the University librarian, the State College librarian, and a teacher of high-school English, be appointed to make out a basic list of books for Montana high-school libraries, such a list to be published; (3) that one person be appointed to make a preliminary report next November on the organization of the high-school course in English with a view to bringing about correlation, co-operation, and standardization in the state high-school English. These recommendations were adopted by the Council.

The following officers were elected for the coming year: President, Mr. Anders Orbeck, State University, Missoula; vice-president, Principal B. E. Millikin, Butte High School; secretary and treasurer, Miss Mignon Quaw, Montana State College, Bozeman; members of the Executive Committee, Miss Penelope Ring, Helena High School; Mr. William Tow, Harlowton High School.

GEORGE R. COFFMAN, *Secretary*

VIRGINIA ENGLISH TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

The third annual meeting of the Virginia English Teachers' Association was held in the Auditorium of the John Marshall High School, Richmond, November 29, 1916. The president, James M. Grainger, of Farmville, presided. The program consisted mainly of addresses on oral training in English.

Miss Evelina O. Wiggins, of the Lynchburg High School, demonstrated many interesting and effective ways in which music and English may be correlated by means of records of musical numbers described or referred to in literature.

Professor John M. Clapp, of New York, secretary of the American Speech League, delivered an address on "The Betterment of American Speech." The South has an especially important opportunity in this work, he said, because here we have as yet the purest Anglo-Saxon blood, as yet practically untouched by the foreign immigration, and

for this reason the purity of the language is more easily maintained. This advantage, coupled with the reputed softness of the southern voice, should enable the people of the South to set the standard of speech for the whole country.

Professor Clapp introduced Miss Claudia E. Crumpton, of the Girls' Technical Institute, Montevallo, Alabama, who explained how the women's clubs and other organizations, business and professional people, schools and churches, and many other elements in the life of the state of Alabama, have been brought together in one great co-operative effort for speech and voice improvement.

Professor L. W. Payne, Jr., of the University of Texas, showed that much of the effort to train children to read aloud in the elementary grades is wasted because of the failure to continue the practice throughout the high school, and that the teaching of literature would be more effective if the children were taught to read it aloud.

On account of the richness of the program it became necessary to dispense with most of the business session in favor of the speakers. The following officers were duly elected by vote of the members present: President, Dr. R. E. Blackwell, Randolph-Macon College, Ashland; vice-president, Professor F. A. Cummings, Hollins College, Hollins; secretary and treasurer, Mr. James M. Grainger, State Normal, Farmville; Executive Committee, in addition to the officers above, Miss Ray Van Vort, Richmond; Miss Mary Moss, Lynchburg. The newly elected president, Dr. Blackwell, appointed Mr. James M. Grainger, of Farmville, to head and select a committee to carry forward the work of the American Speech League in Virginia. The chairman of the Committee on Handbook for Teachers of English, Professor Charles G. Maphis, of the University of Virginia, reported that the *Handbook* is nearing completion and may soon be in the hands of the printer. The president's report, also necessarily omitted, summed up the activities of the Association during the past year. The resolutions asking for the reduction of the number of pupils assigned to each teacher for instruction in English and for the reduction of the amount of grammar required in the elementary school have been given very considerable publicity, and the attention of other organizations of teachers has been drawn to the needs and activities of the English group.

Live English teachers' clubs are at work in some of the cities, and promising work has already been done in inaugurating the better-speech movement in the state, Professor Clapp having visited three of the state normal schools and worked among the teachers present at the

annual conference. The Association has become officially affiliated with the National Council of Teachers of English.

REALLY DEMOCRATIC CONTESTS

The Louisiana State University is conducting this year a unique sort of contest among the schools of its state. Each school, instead of being represented by a single pupil, must be represented by all the pupils of the class who made a passing grade during the first term. The pupils necessarily do the work in their own schools under the supervision of a local committee. There are contests in algebra for the ninth grade, English for the eighth grade, French, plane geometry, and first-year Latin.

The contest in eighth-grade English consists of dictation and composition only. One or more paragraphs of dictation based upon the spelling-list now used in the eighth grade are given and the papers are graded principally on spelling, but also for gross errors in punctuation, neatness, and legibility. For the composition contest the committee will choose five from a long list of subjects published in advance, and the individual student will choose one of these, upon which he must write not less than two pages. The papers are to be judged, of course, by a central committee. An interesting feature of the composition contest is the publication beforehand by the committee of warnings against the kinds of errors into which eighth-grade pupils are likely to fall, in order that their teachers may drill them to avoid just those errors.

ILLINOIS PRINCIPALS STUDY ENGLISH PROBLEMS

The Central Illinois High School Principals' Club, under the leadership of Professor C. H. Johnston, of the University of Illinois, has decided to focus its work for the year upon problems growing out of, or clearly related to, the administration and pedagogy of high-school English. At the six scheduled meetings of the club its members will discuss important topics, previously announced and intensively studied, upon both the practical and theoretical sides. Tests and scales for measuring achievement in composition, standardizing of courses and results by years, the administration of all the language departments of the high schools so as to effect a common standard for all written work, oral English (California, New York, and other plans), and the Grand Rapids scheme for vocational guidance through English composition are some of the topics they will discuss. Better than all this, the club will undertake an inves-

tigation to determine whether the present movement to separate the teaching of composition from the teaching of literature is justifiable or not. The criterion is to be found in the correlation or lack of correlation between the abilities necessary for success in composition and in literature. In order to determine this the members of the club are asking their teachers of English to estimate each pupil's ability in "analytical" work, such as is required for success in the formal matters of composition, and his "literary" ability, such as is required for appreciation and interpretation of literature. If it shall appear that a high degree of one ability is usually accompanied by a considerable amount of the other, the separation is probably unwise. If it appears in many cases that a high degree of "literary" ability, for instance, is not accompanied by any considerable amount of "analytical" ability, the wisdom of the separation will be indicated.

PROGRESS IN NEW YORK CITY

The New York City Association of High School Teachers of English has for some time been conducting a campaign against what a majority of its members considered an undue emphasis upon formal grammar. Every graduate from the general course of the city high schools was obliged to pass a three-hour Regents' examination in grammar. About two years ago a committee, headed by Dr. William P. Wharton, made a careful study of the situation with the result that it found a widespread dissatisfaction over existing conditions. Another committee, headed by Mr. Joseph Loew, after an investigation of the time spent on grammar in the elementary schools, reached the conclusion that too much time was spent on formal grammar. Then, in February, 1916, Mr. Edwin Fairley gave notice that at the next meeting of the Association, in May, 1916, he would move that "it is the belief of this Association that the requirement in English grammar should be abolished as a requisite for graduation from high school."

After a full discussion this resolution was adopted, but an exception was made in still recommending the requirement for those graduates who were going to training schools. Mr. Fairley was asked to bring the action of the Association to the attention of the authorities. Accordingly he drew up the following brief, which he sent to all the members of the board of superintendents:

THE REGENTS' REQUIREMENT IN ENGLISH GRAMMAR

At present every graduate from the general course in the New York City high schools must pass a three-hour examination in English grammar.

This requirement should be abolished, for

- I. It is a needless duplication, for
 - A. The matter of grammar is already sufficiently covered by the grammar questions in the three-year English paper, for
 1. This is from 20 to 25 per cent of the whole paper.
- II. It cannot be given in any term without seriously interfering with the proper work of that term, for
 - A. It requires work on questions of grammar which do not function in correct speech or writing, for
 1. It calls for such things as the factitive objective, the retained object.
- III. The English teachers of the city at their regular meeting in May, 1916, voted to ask that this requirement be abolished.
- IV. Grammar does not teach correct speech, for
 - A. The new state syllabus in English says: "It cannot be hoped that the study of grammar will result in the use of correct speech" (p. 18).
 - B. A careful scientific study by F. S. Hoyt, of Teachers College and Indianapolis, reaches the same conclusion. See *Teachers College Record*, November, 1906 (apparently the only scientific study ever made).
- V. It is not a prerequisite for graduation from any high schools in New York state except those in our city.
- VI. The dropping of this requirement would release some valuable time which could be used in study and drill in correct speech forms.
- VII. The present time, when a new course of study is being put into operation, is an opportune time for the change.

Early in December, 1916, the Board of Superintendents abolished the requirement. So here endeth that lesson.

E. F.

USEFUL DOCUMENTS

The Sixteenth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education is being issued in three parts. Part I, which contains the "Second Report of the Committee on Minimal Essentials in Elementary School Subjects," and Part III, which is devoted to an extensive compilation of facts regarding the junior high school, have already appeared. Address the Public-School Publishing Co., Bloomington, Illinois. Each part 75 cents. Postage extra.—The public schools of Topeka, Kansas, have compiled an outline of principles and experiments in *Training Pupils to Study*. Address Superintendent H. B. Wilson. Free.—Two bulletins of the Bureau of Education serve to show what is being done in relatively new departments of education. *Bulletin*, 1916, No. 25 (10 cents) deals with "Commercial Education" as discussed by the Pan-American

Scientific Congress. *Bulletin*, 1916, No. 37 (20 cents) is an account of the "Co-operative System of Education" as developed at the University of Cincinnati.—*Bulletin* 17b, containing "Composition Standards," and *Bulletin* 18, containing "Word Lists for Spelling" for all school grades from the seventh elementary school year to the last term in high school, have been issued by the New York City Association of Teachers of English. Each bulletin may be had on application to Dr. C. R. Gaston, 215 Abingdon Road, Richmond Hill, New York. The cost of each is ten cents, in stamps.

THE PERIODICALS

THE REORGANIZATION OF SECONDARY ENGLISH

In *Educational Administration and Supervision* for February appeared the address on "The Reorganization of English in the Secondary Schools," which was given by James F. Hosic, chairman of the Committee of Thirty, before the Secondary Department of the National Education Association in New York last July. The speaker summarized the report by explaining its purpose, namely, to kill off the preparatory fallacy and to stimulate the high schools to work out constructive educational programs of their own. Such programs must take into account the enormously increasing and varied high-school population, the essentially social character of language and literature, the necessity of distinguishing the more formal and utilitarian phases of English from the aesthetic and inspirational, the interdependence of the various departments of the school in the matter of thought and expression, the value of extra-classroom activities, the need of suitable library and other equipment and of limiting the size and number of classes, and, finally, the supreme importance of securing teachers with suitable personality, adequate scholarship, thorough professional training, and wide outlook. In general the reorganization needed is of the same character as that demanded for the secondary course as a whole, which consists essentially in choosing subject-matter capable of providing genuine stimulation and experience for the pupils in the present in contrast to that selected because of its supposed value at some future period.

LITERATURE À LA CARTE

John B. Opdycke contributes to the literature of protest an article called "Literature à la Carte," which is published in the *School Review* for February. In a breezy, not to say exaggerated, manner he sets

forth the evils of the *table d'hôte* course in literature, and proceeds to describe the better way, which, he declares, consists in permitting groups of pupils to read and discuss such "squads" of poetry and prose as appeal to them. The idea seems to be essentially that of handling as units selections dealing with a particular interest, as, for example, animal poetry or stories of business. The writer admits that his picture is somewhat overdrawn, but defends it as needed for a corrective.

THE MASQUE OF POETS

The editor of *The Best Short Stories of 1916*, Mr. Edward J. O'Brien, has turned his attention to contemporary poetry, and presents in the *Bookman*, beginning with February, a series of selections from such writers as Amy Lowell, Grace Hazard Conkling, Edgar Lee Masters, and Josephine Preston Peabody. The canny editor of the *Bookman* announces that these poems will be published anonymously at first in order that readers may guess who the writers are.

SUPERVISION OF COLLEGE TEACHING

The title just given is not that chosen by Dean Frank P. Graves, of the College of Education in the University of Pennsylvania, for his address before the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland at its annual meeting. Nevertheless, that is, in principle, what he suggested. His very tactful and convincing argument for criticism of college teaching may be followed by the curious in *School and Society* for February 3.

THE HIGH SCHOOL OF TOMORROW

Dr. David Snedden's address on "The High School of Tomorrow" will be found in the *School Review* for January. In it educational objectives are broken up into a series of over a hundred specific purposes, represented by units of subject-matter classified as *alpha* or "hard" and *beta* or "soft." "Hard" subjects are intended for direct utility, "soft" subjects for appreciation. As a means toward the reconstruction of high-school programs this specific analysis of objectives is probably necessary.